

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez (D-CA) today congratulated Rep. Frank Wolf (R-VA) on being named a new Co-Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Vietnam. Congressman Wolf will join Reps. Sanchez, Chris Smith (R-NJ), and Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) as a leader of the Caucus, which works to raise public awareness of the egregious human rights violations taking place in Vietnam.

“The Congressional Caucus on Vietnam has always worked across party lines to fight for the Vietnamese people,” said Rep. Sanchez. “It is in this spirit of bipartisanship that we welcome Rep. Wolf to the leadership of this important Caucus. My colleagues and I welcome his insight as we look for new ways to encourage Vietnam’s government to expand freedom of speech, religion, and other basic civil and political liberties.”

“I am especially concerned by the recent unwarranted attack of Christian Marchant, the political officer at the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam, by the Vietnamese police,” Rep. Sanchez continued. “In preparation for its 11th National Congress, the Vietnamese Communist Party has increased its persecution of activists who speak out against the government’s abysmal human rights record. I urge the State Department to not only condemn these human rights violations, but take action that might compel Vietnam to change.”

“I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve as a co-chair of the bipartisan Congressional Caucus on Vietnam—a caucus which plays a critical role in shining a bright light on the egregious human rights abuses of the Government of Vietnam,” said Rep. Wolf. “For too long the people of Vietnam have endured repression, harassment, imprisonment and beatings simply for exercising their fundamental rights. The caucus serves as an important voice in the U.S. Congress pressing for change in Vietnam and working to ensure these issues aren’t sidelined in our bilateral relations with Vietnam.”

The Congressional Caucus on Vietnam is a bipartisan association of Members of Congress that condemns the ongoing human rights violations in Vietnam. The Caucus regularly holds briefings, press conferences, and other meetings to highlight Vietnam’s abuse of religious freedom, labor rights, and other civil and political liberties. In the 111th Congress, the Caucus’ members introduced numerous legislative items calling attention to the human rights abuses taking place in Vietnam, including the Vietnam Human Rights Sanctions Act. If adopted, the bill which would impose sanctions on individuals who perpetrate or are complicit in human rights abuses committed against nationals of Vietnam or their family members.